

DON MCKAY: Good morning. I'm Don McKay, and for the last twelve years I have lived on the beautiful part of the Clinch Mountain in Hancock County, Tennessee and supported resistance to the destruction of the mountains and communities of Appalachia. I gave up a day of walking in the woods with my dog, Lovey, and drove two-and-a-half hours in the rain to be here today. I appreciate whatever you all have given up to listen to our concerns and to support the changes. I also have to tell you that I admire your buns of steel. I haven't seen anybody stand up in over two hours, so I don't know how you do it. As I was reflecting on my concerns, a strange image came to mind, that image of cowboys and Indians as seen on TV in the 1950's and 60's. Cowboys, of course, wore the white hat and were determined to "civilize" the "savage Indian." You may wonder what that has to do with leasing mineral rights. Well, you should be aware that nearly thirty percent of the coal in the United States is on tribal lands. And until 1980, the indigenous people could only be passively sourced of the minerals they owned. In other words, they have little or no control of the decisions affecting them. Apparently, before 1980, they were still not considered civilized and had no control over these minerals. Instead, the BLM did. Many in Appalachia have suffered the same fate, their inability to control their land and the minerals that supported them has resulted in great injustices. Hopefully, the BLM will seriously support the move toward a fairly view of federal leasing that will set high enough standards to address the concerns. The true cost of coal from destruction of the land and water to destruction of individuals' health to the potential destruction of the climate, as you deliberate and, hopefully, move to a just transition to a coal-free economy, I urge each of you to: One, set the royalty rate at least equal to those of off-shore oil, which is 18 1/2 percent. Two, if coal is to be shipped out of this country, out of my mine U.S.A., an additional royalty should be attached. Three, insure that in a transition to a new system that the land, water, and people are given priority protection. Four, the coal in nearby communities or underwater systems or near -- in view sight of religious sites not be mined. I will end my comments by saying let's quote from the streets of the United States, we need a revolution, and I hope you all lead the BLM Revolution. Thank you.